

**News from the Rensselaer County Legislature
Office of the Minority 270-2892**

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Democratic Legislators Encourage Cost Controls for County Fleet

Troy—Skyrocketing gas prices are hitting every budget hard, and the Rensselaer County Budget is no exception. Consequently Rensselaer County Democratic Minority Legislators are encouraging the passage of a beefed up resolution to study options and implement a program to reduce overall fuel consumption.

“We’re glad to join the initiative by our colleagues to help control the impact of runaway fuel costs on the County budget. However we’ve requested that some amendments to the resolution they’ve introduced to strengthen the measure and to ensure that we move beyond doing studies and take action. We’re calling for a comprehensive review and revision of vehicle usage guidelines and a clear timeline for a report on the study. It’s essential that we get this important information before the next budget is released in October,” said Minority Leader Ginny O’Brien.

The resolution filed by the Republican Majority encourages carpooling and the use of mass transit by county employees as a way to conserve fuel. The Democrats’ amendment would add elected officials to the group who might take advantage of those options as well. The Majority also suggests “...a review of any possible fuel efficiencies in the operation of the county fleet, including review of possible conversion of diesel engines as a cost-saving measure, future purchases of hybrid vehicles and replace [sic] of existing vehicles with more fuel-efficient vehicles.”

“It sounds like a good start to me,” said Legislator Peter Grimm. “I know that a number of counties in New York, including our neighbor Schenectady County, have partnered with NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) to audit their fleets to reduce carbon emissions and gas usage. Now that we’re getting on board with energy conservation, perhaps we can learn from some of the successful programs that other counties have put into action.”

“We have to take a hard look expenses across the board,” added Legislator Flora Fasoldt. “I’ve had some of my constituents remark about the use of county cars and wonder why they have to pay the cost of political photo ops. Now I can tell them we’re going to take a look at it.”